

Of true Christian and English Courage.

A
S E R M O N,
Preach'd in the
Cathedral-Church
O F
H E R E F O R D,
A T T H E
A S S I Z E S

H E L D A T

Hereford, August the 14th, 1715.

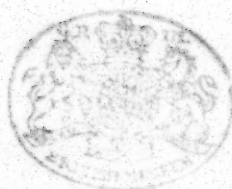
Before Mr. Justice *BLENCOE*, and
Mr. Justice *DORMER*.

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his Grace the Lord Arch-Bishop of *Canterbury*.

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and the Gentlemen of the GRAND JURY.

L O N D O N: 

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2 TIM. Chap. 1. v. 7.

*For God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear,
but of Power, and of Love, and of a sound
Mind.*

TH O' these Words may at first view seem to be confined to the Apostolical Times, when the extraordinary Gifts of God (one of which is mention'd in the preceding *ver. 6.*

Verse) were bestow'd by *laying on of the Hands* of Persons that were eminently endowed with the Holy Spirit, yet they certainly relate to all future Ages of the Christian Church, tho' not in the same exalted Sense of miraculous Gifts, but agreeably to the standing dispensation of Grace in the Christian Religion. For tho' in the settled times of Christianity, there is not that occasion for miraculous Gifts as there was at the first Propagation of the Gospel; yet the constant Exigencies of the Church require some degrees of assistance of the Blessed Spirit, and the whole Body of Christians have a Covenant-Title to the Promise of their Lord and Head, namely, that *he will be with them alway, even unto the end of the World.*

Matt. 28. 20.

Taking therefore the words of the Text in the utmost Latitude they are capable of, I shall

I. Enquire in what true Courage consists. *For God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power.*

II. I shall shew, that Christianity lays the foundation of the truest Courage. *God hath not given us, that is, us Christians, the Spirit of Fear.*

And III. I shall evince, that true Christian Courage is attended with Love and a sound Mind. *For God hath given us the Spirit of Love and of a sound Mind.*

After which, I shall conclude with an Application of the whole to the present Solemnity.

First, I am to enquire in what true Courage consists.

In general it must be acknowledged to be a Virtue that disposes the Person possessed of it, to form excellent Designs, and to pursue them with Resolution and Intrepidity, notwithstanding any Difficulties that may seem to deter him. It is not necessary indeed, that the End proposed by a Man of Fortitude, should always be some mighty Enterprize that will make some Noise in the World for that perhaps may be out of his Sphere, and beyond his Abilities to attain. But the End proposed must be always consider'd as the best thing he is capable of performing. It is therefore the Duties of our respective Stations, that are the just Objects of our rational Courage and moral Gallantry.

We need not labour to find out imaginary Difficulties to encounter, since there are real ones enough in all assignable Circumstances of human Life, that demand all our force and steadiness of Mind to engage, in order to discharge the Duties of our several Posts in the World and our Relations to one another. A small Experience of Mankind will instruct us, that to dare to do what is incumbent on us, in opposition to the Allurements of Menaces of those that always make up the Majority of the World, requires all the succours of Reason, and vigour of Resolution. So that Courage ought not really to be consider'd as a mere single Virtue, but as a Grace that has a very wide and diffusive influence on all other Virtues, that quickens their Motions, and animates them with new Life and spirit; since in Fact it is impossible to be sincerely Virtuous in any one respect, without a firmness of Soul proportionate to all those Temptations that surround us. Applications may be so artfully made to the Weakness and Corruptions of Mankind, as to be irresistible by any but Men of true Courage and greatness of Soul. And in this consists the strength of false Politicians, that they know how to address themselves to the several defects and Infirmities of Men by suitable Temptations. They are very well apprized, that most Men leave some part of their Heart unguarded, and lie open to some particular Attack; 'tis therefore their peculiar Business to make an Assault where there is the least Opposition. They find the generalizing of Mankind are exposed to sollicitation by an immoderate love of Money, or are caught by sensual Pleasures, or are dazzled with the splendor of Honours and high Stations. And since this Weakness is not confined to the lower part of the

World

World, but an Attempt is practicable on for
 darling Passion of the great Vulgar as well as t
 small, the Bribe is only to be raised higher in pr
 portion to the Quality and Station of those that a
 to be thus seduced from Virtue and Goodne
 - This is a Frailty of Mind that is too often disc
 ver'd in all the Affairs of Life, both of a priva
 Retirement and a publick Station. For huma
 Nature is the very same thing in all the variety
 outward Circumstances. And therefore, unle
 Men are armed with Resolution and Courage suff
 cient to give a brisk denial to the insinuation of t
 false Friend, and a vigorous Repulse to the op
 Enemy, all their boasted Virtue is vain and inf
 nificant, their Integrity lies at Mercy, and (to u
 a Military expression on this Occasion) the who
 Man is storm'd in Breach, whilst he is betray
 within, and must therefore surrender at Discretio

But the true Fortitude of a Mind well fixed
 right Principles of Life, upon just and mature d
 liberation, will not only enable a Man to perfor
 his Duty, either of a Private nature, or for t
 Publick Service, agreeably to the Opportunities
 for'd him by Providence, but likewise to be
 with Patience the Odium of a virtuous Singularit
 and to despise the Calumnies of Party-fury for d
 ring to Act with sincerity and Zeal, in defens
 of the common Interest of the Body to which
 belongs. For that Courage is very imperfect th
 cannot bear the shock of an ill-natured Worl
 Resentment and Injury are to be expected by eve
 well-prepared Breast, as the usual reward of d
 charging our Duty in times of difficulty and Part
 Divisions. In that War of Fraud, Dissimulation
 and Revenge that is generally carried on by forme

Parti

Parties, the Passive Valour is sometimes as necessary as that of the Active Kind. As for the Unfortunate Accidents of Life, a moderate degree of Philosophy will give us a decent Conduct and tolerable Ease; and a View of the uncertainty of the Affairs of this World, will contribute to a just Contempt of so fickle an Happiness as is founded on them. These are indeed necessary Evils, the Yoke must be born tho' with a reluctant Neck, but Voluntarily to suffer Misery, as the unavoidable Consequence of adhering to a good Cause, requires an Heroical degree of Courage; to *take Pleasure in Reproaches, and glory in Tribulation*, is really Apostolical; to advance with an unaffected Composure of Mind and Aspect towards a Stake in View, which may be declined by a small compliance, is the height of Fortitude assisted by a Divine Impulse, and is a *Spectacle* worthy not only of *Men and Angels*, but of *God* himself.

From which Consideration I naturally proceed to shew in the

Second Place, that Christianity lays the Foundation of the truest Courage.

It has been objected by *Machiavel*, that the Christian Religion emasculates to that degree the minds of simple and well-meaning Men, by its Precepts of excessive Goodness, as to deliver them up an unguarded Prey to the malice of their Enemies. The Scoff likewise of *Julian* the Apostate fell on our Holy Faith for its Precepts of Suffering, when he told the Christians, that they should be gratified with that pleasure of Suffering which their Gospel so often recommended to them. But these are unjust Aspersions on the Christian Religion, which is very far from infusing Cowardice into

its

its Followers, and very far from forbidding them to insist on their Legal Rights and Properties, and to defend themselves from the rage of their implacable Enemies. Indeed the Sufferings of Christians are so far from being an imputation on the Religion, that the greatest Instances of Fortitude that ever the World saw yet, were given before Christianity was settled by human Laws. As the greatest Courage was necessary to Propagate the Christian Religion, so the sealing the truth of it with the Blood of multitudes of its first Professors was so far from being a mean and abject thing that it required a degree of Magnanimity, in all Orders and Ranks of Christians, that was little known to the Wisest and Greatest Men in the Heathen World. But however different their Case became, when their Religion was embraced by the Roman Empire, and the Laws might be appealed to in their Favour, there was still occasion for their Bravery of another kind, and an Active Courage, was much better suited to that happy alteration of Affairs. They were then left to Act as Men in a Community and protected by human Laws, under the natural influence of that Fortitude which is inspired by true Christianity, as before it was very much owing to the superiour Assistance of God's Holy Spirit.

Now it is very Evident that Christianity has many and great Advantages of infusing Courage into the minds of its Professors, above all other Institutions of Religion that have prevailed in the World. It gives so full a Discovery of a Particular Providence that mixes it self with the most minute Affairs, as well as the greatest Transactions, that the firm belief of being in the Divine Favour, and
render

under the immediate Protection of so kind and
 powerful a Friend and Benefactor as God himself,
 is a neverfailing support of a true Christian under
 all the Troubles and Misfortunes of Life. His as-
 surance likewise of the Grace of God, as being ever
 ready to enable him to perform the Moral Condi-
 tions of the new Covenant, is a mighty Perswasive
 to exert his best Endeavours in a vigorous Concur-
 rence with it. This will both rouze and strength-
 en all the Powers of his Mind, by the belief as well
 as inward Assistance of so effectual a Fellow-work-
 er with him. If we add that Contempt of this
 World, which is not only taught in Christian Mo-
 rality, but is re-inforced with the greatest energy,
 by the consideration of that *Life and Immortality*
which is brought to light by the Gospel, we shall not
 doubt, but that a genuine Christian will be ani-
 mated with a Spirit of Fortitude, that bears some
 proportion to the glory of that Future State for
 which he is here a Candidate, and with which the
 severest *Sufferings* of this short Scene are not worthy
 to be Compared. But above all, Christianity exalts
 the Courage of its sincere Professor to that sublime
 degree, as to enable him to banish all anxious Fear
 of the most formidable thing in the World, and I
 need not tell you that is Death it self, For ye, that
 ye Christians, *have not received the*
Spirit of Bondage again to Fear. The Rom. 8. 15.
 The rest of Mankind are justly said to be *all their Life-*
time thro' fear of Death subject to Bondage;
 But the Christian is taught to triumph Heb. 2. 15.
 over Death and the Grave. And since the greatest
 power that one man can have over another, is that
 of taking away his Life, surely he must be acknow-
 ledged to be a perfect Hero that is not *afraid of the*

Terrours of the greatest Wickedness acting in conjunction with the greatest Power ; of those, name-

Luke 12. 4 *ly, that can kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: as*

being absolutely convinced that *neither Death nor Life, nor any other Creature, shall be able to seperate him from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Rom. 8. 38.
39.

And if true Courage be so great an Ingredient in the composition of a Christian, and at the same time his Religion obliges him conscientiously to perform the several Duties of the Relations he bears to the World, certainly he must discharge those Duties with greater Vigour and Fidelity than the rest of Mankind that are not influenced by such powerful Principles. Not to detain you at present with Instances of other Relations, the *Christian Magistrate* is under the strictest Obligations possible to be uncorrupt, and distribute impartial Justice ; if he acts agreeably to his Function, he will not be awed by popular Clamours, nor regard the Madness of the People, but upon all

Rom. 13. 4. *proper occasions will shew that he bears not the Sword in vain, and that he is a Minister of God to execute Wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

Thirdly, I proceed to shew that true Christian Courage is attended with *Love and a sound Mind.*

As to Love, we are assured no less by Experience than Divine Revelation, that perfect love casteth out fear. And this Quality will appear to be essential to Love, whether we consider that Passion with relation to God or Man, since the nature of Love is the same upon whatever Object it is placed.

John 4. 18

perfect love casteth out fear.

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With regard to God, true Love will inspire the person that is endowed with it, with the most fervent Zeal for his Service, it will teach him to despise all hazards for the sake of the Gospel, and even to lay down his Life with Joy for the Glory of God upon a just and proper Occasion: Such was the warm temper of the first Christians; who unless they had been wholly influenced by *Faith that works by Love*, could never surely have been prevailed with, to set out from *Jerusalem* in prosecution of a Design that was, humanly speaking, so unlikely to succeed as that of the Conversion of the World to the Christian Religion. But *the Love of Christ constrained them* (as *St. Paul* speaks) to encounter the greatest Difficulties, and expose themselves to all possible Dangers with an undaunted Bravery, in the Propagation of Christianity. Of which we need no other account than is given us in the genuine *Acts of the Apostles*, and *St. Paul's* Catalogue of his own Sufferings, that shine with so noble a Simplicity as to carry their own Attestation along with them. Neither need we any other Proof of the invincible Courage as well as ardent love of God by which the Primitive Christians distinguished themselves, than their readiness to offer up their Blood in confirmation of their Holy Faith, and devote their lives a Sacrifice to the God of Truth; since Martyrdom includes both those Qualities in the highest degree of Perfection, and it must be confessed that *greater Love, as well as Courage, has no Man than he that lays down his Life for his Friend.*

As to our Brethren, it is certain we Christians are obliged to consider all Mankind in that Capacity, and to treat them with an universal Benevo-

lence. But principally *the Household of Faith*, our Christian Brethren demand our warmest Affection, as Fellow-Members of the Body of Christ, and Heirs with us of the same Promises. If we were animated with the antient Spirit of Christianity we should dare to revive the old distinguishing Character of Christians; namely, that of Love; Character, almost intirely lost in these later degenerate Ages. We should then learn to bear with greater Patience the infirmities of the Weak, and endeavour to reduce the Erroneous not with force and Violence and Persecution, (which ever were and ever will be Absurd as well as Unchristian Methods of Conviction) but to enlighten their Understanding with Friendly Perswasives, and overcome their Prejudices by a kind treatment of the Persons, as well as by a dextrous application of Arguments suited to their Capacities.

As we are Members of the same civil Community, we are enjoined *not to look every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*; that is, to labour after a true

Phil. 2. 4.

Publick Spirit. It cannot well be doubted but that as Christianity promotes the Happiness of private Persons, it consults the good of the Publick since the one is necessarily included in the other. Indeed the Love of the true publick Interest comprehends the Love of all other Relations, since it is supposed to pursue the best and most proper methods of supporting both Church and State. But this generous Passion requires the greatest Fortitude both of the Active and the Passive Kind. Those that are called by Providence to the Administration of Affairs, or are intrusted with the Execution of the Laws of the Land, and are therefore obliged

Act, will frequently find the necessity of true Courage, in order to preserve their own Integrity, by protecting the Good, and punishing the Bad, agreeably to the end of Government itself. More especially at a time when Party-Divisions run high, and Rebellion threatens the Publick, all that sincerely love the Prosperity of our *Sion*, are obliged to exert themselves in repressing the Insolence of those that are tainted with Sedition. Their love of the Publick will teach them to use aright in all particular Cases, the Power that is delegated to them, for the preservation of the Property of innocent Subjects, and reducing to Order and Justice, those that dare to disturb the publick Tranquility.

Persons that are thus placed in eminent Stations, are obliged to *Act* for the Publick Service : Others in more Private Circumstances must *suffer* for it. Calumny and Party-Scandal, require some degrees of Fortitude to bear them. But next to suffering for a good Conscience in the Cause of Religion, the noblest instance of Courage is given in exposing not only our Reputation and Fortunes, but our Lives, for the Publick Good. To Die for one's Country, I mean, for the preservation of the Laws and Liberties of it, as it requires the truest love of its Constitution, so the most consummate Bravery and greatness of Soul. This is a Virtue that was highly celebrated by the Wisest of the ancient Heathens, the *Greeks* and *Romans* ; from whom, some that call themselves Christians, ought to learn, to practice better their Duty to their Native Country. The love of their Country is equally Obligatory on Christians with the rest of Mankind ; for Christianity has made no alteration in matters of a Civil Nature, excepting that it has reinforced

forced the love of the Publick in its Professors under the stronger Obligations of pleasing God, and their hopes of arriving at a better State, by a sincere performance of their Relative Duties in the present one.

That true Christian Courage is attended likewise with a *sound Mind*, will appear very obvious when we consider the true import of that Expression. By a *Sound Mind*, *σωφρονισμός* in the Original, is to be understood, a sober, equal, prudent Temper of Soul. We call it a *Sound Mind*, as it is supposed to enjoy all its rational Faculties in perfection, and to be as free from all Disorders of the Passions, as a sound and healthy Body is from Distempers. When (if I may so express it) the Pulse of the Soul beats regularly, and all the Powers of it are in a state of Vigor and fit for Action. When the Mind is neither inflamed into the Fever of Rashness, nor sinks into the Lethargy of Supineness and Inactivity. In short, when the Soul forms good Designs and pursues them by the most proper Means with a just Application, notwithstanding any Difficulties that may lie in the way; when it resolves sedately, and acts with a well-temper'd Zeal; it may be said to have *the Spirit of Power, and of a sound Mind*. As the Passions are ill Counsellors, so unless they are under the government of Reason, they are ill Actors, and often in the Tragical way. Their sudden Heats are of too short a duration to bring us to the End we propose, and frequently use the most improper Means of arriving at it. The Extremes therefore that they throw us into, are to be avoided with the utmost Caution. This is what we call true Moderation and evenness of Temper, which will both direct

direct our Conduct aright, enable us to persevere in our Resolutions. A Virtue this, that however misunderstood, and therefore ridiculed, contributes very much to the happiness of Life, as well as to avoiding of dangerous *Extremes* in point of Judgment and Opinion. Thus, for Instance, the Constitution of the Church of England is founded in true Moderation, as it steers between the Extremes of Popery, and endless Separation. And thus the Civil Constitution of our Country is happily adjusted in our Legal Liberty, as a Medium between the Absolute Power of the Prince, and Licentiousness of the Subject. Thus too in the Conduct of Life, this equal tenour of Mind is principally discover'd in the different turns of human Affairs, when it is not exalted into Pride and Arrogance, by a course of Affluence and Prosperity, nor sinks into Despair and abject Thoughts, by Adversity and ill Success. And this is the natural Effect of true Christian Fortitude; not only as it inspires its Professors with a mean Opinion of this World, and mortifies those Passions that are so apt to ruffle and discompose the Mind, but likewise as the firm belief of the Divine Providence, is the best and most powerful inducement to bear the various Changes and Chances of this life with Resignation and Constancy.

As a *sound Mind* signifies Prudence in our Conduct, and *walking Circumspectly*, in Scripture language, it may probably refer not only to avoiding of Scandal by any *appearance of Evil*, but likewise to the declining of all unnecessary Persecution and Sufferings, by fair and honest Arts. For tho' it has been already shewn, that true Christian Courage will be attended

ed with so sincere and fervent a love of God, as induce those that are favour'd by Heaven, with so great a Grace, to offer up their Lives a Sacrifice to the Truth and Honour of Religion, upon all just and proper Occasions; yet Prudence may be allow'd to make an impartial judgment of the Occasions, lest we *offer the Sacrifice of Fools*, and under a pretence of Piety, become really guilty of Self-Murder. For it is certainly time enough to Suffer (and especially if we consider how few are qualified for Suffering) when the hard Law of inevitable Necessity lays that Obligation on us. This is, when the Denial of some Truth of God, or the Practice of some unlawful thing, is imposed upon us by a Force and Violence that we cannot possibly escape, without meanly deserting our Religion. In such a Case, when our Duty and Safety interfere with one another, that is, when to preserve our Lives, we must betray our Souls, we ought, without the least hesitation, to prefer our eternal Interests to those of a short transitory State. But since our Lord commands us to be *wise as Serpents*, whilst we are *harmless as Doves*, and allows us, when we are *persecuted in one City*, the liberty of *flying* (for security no doubt) *to another*; it may be own'd to be lawful for us to use all proper Methods of escaping the rage of Persecution. It is therefore far from true Christian Courage, to be Volunteers in Suffering, and surrender our Lives without Compulsion, as some mistaken Christians in the Primitive Ages are said to have done. But neither God nor Reason, have required this at our Hands. And if some of the first Christians committed an Error, tho' a well-meaning one, on this occasion, at a time when their Religion was

by the known Laws of the Empire, how great Infatuation are they guilty of, who seem to court Persecution without Necessity, and would make a tame surrender of those Lives that are secured to them by the Laws of the Land, and all the just Authority and Power in the World? Surely such Persons, however Courageous they may seem to be, are not qualified for Suffering by a *Sound Mind*, and rather deserve the Chains that confine Madmen, than those that adorn a Martyr Jesus Christ.

Having thus explained the meaning of *the Spirit of Power, of Love, and of a Sound Mind*, in the Text; now come to the Application of the whole to this day's Solemnity.

Permit me on this occasion, (in the words of the Apostle to *Timothy*) to 2 Tim. 1. 6.
stir up the gift, or Grace, of God that is in you. The extraordinary juncture of our Affairs at present justly demands the exerting of all that Christian Courage I have now discoursed of. Certainly the Times speak aloud, and Things themselves demand with an energy beyond mere Words, that there is great necessity to rouse and summon up the Powers of our Souls, when we are threatened with an Invasion from abroad, and fear too many at home are engaged in an unnatural Conspiracy to favour that Enterprize, to invite the Enemy to it by their Rebellious Tumults, and to assist him in it when brought to maturity. For what can be the meaning of open Riots and suspected Treachery, but a formed Resolution to bring on us the two greatest Calamities that can befall a Nation, namely Popery and Arbitrary Power; that is, in other words, Slavery both of Soul and Body? And it must be allow'd to add to the black-

ness of the Storm that seems to be gathering about our Church and State, that there is too much reason to apprehend there are False Brethren among us; who are ever haranguing on the pretended Danger of the Church, whilst it is really undermined by themselves under a Masque of Zeal for it. A Sett of Men, who have nothing but the sound of Loyalty in their Mouths, Rebellion in their Hearts, and indeed Swords of late in their Hands. Who have learned the Art of eluding the most Sacred Tyes of Society, and have the Assurance to take the most solemn Oaths to the Government, in order to have an opportunity to insult and betray it with a better Grace. Who, in short, blow up the Passions of the unthinking Multitude, by all the Arts of Falshood and Dissimulation, into a surrender of their own Native Liberty, and seem to prepare the way for a return to Popery, by an open paliation of some of its Doctrines, and by rendering it less the Aversion of the present Generation, than it so justly was of our Fore-fathers.

In such a complication of ill Circumstances, where there are more than *Rumours of War* without, and we are sure there are Fears enough within, it becomes us to prepare our selves for encountring Difficulties, and consider how we may arm our Minds against the worst that can possibly happen. It has been shewn before, that *God has not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power*. As we are Christians, and those too of the purest Form and Profession, it is our Duty not to entertain any desponding Thoughts of that good Providence which has so often and so signally interposed in our Deliverance. However, it is incumbent on us, in that Capacity, to fortify our Minds against all Contingencies of an uncertain World, by qualifying them for the *Fiery*

trial, and the undergoing all that Misery which
 our most successful Enemies can inflict upon us.
 But since enough has already been said upon
 that Subject, and since the Christian Religion
 has made no innovation to the prejudice of our Ci-
 vil Liberties, it becomes us, both of the Clergy and
 Laity, to consider we are *Englishmen*, and as such,
 to act with a Vigour and Zeal suited to our respec-
 tive Stations, and proportionable to our true an-
 cient English Constitution. However private and
 obscure our Condition and State of Life may be,
 it is in our Power to contribute to the preservation
 of our Constitution, by paying all due Obedience
 to the Higher Powers, by our constant Prayers to
 God for the success of the labours of our Superiors
 for the Publick Good, and by *studying to be Quiet,*
and do our own Business. If we are placed by provi-
 dence in Posts of Justice and Government, as these
 require a more active Genius, answerable to the pu-
 blick Character assign'd us, and the eminent Trust
 reposed in us, those Magistrates may be said by no un-
 charitable Construction, to betray their Country and
 its most important Interests, who do not exert them-
 selves in any Popular Commotions and disturbances
 of the Publick Peace. If they are either Fainthearted,
 and dare not act in such difficult Conjunctions of Affairs,
 or think it a piece of Discretion and Prudence, to sit
 by silently, and secure themselves by a false Ease,
 whilst the rest of the World is in Confusion about
 them; such Magistrates are themselves guilty of
 all those publick Disorders which they do not take
 care either to prevent or remedy. For to what end
 and purpose are they raised to higher Stations than
 others, but to take a larger Prospect of things, and
 consequently have a wider Influence on the rest of
 Mankind? If then from the lowest Officer that

presides in a Parish to the highest that subordinately governs a County, any are found in other parts of the Nation, that think not fit to interpose in appeasing the Insurrections of the deluded part of the People, and are negligent in extinguishing those Flames, that if blown up more fiercely and united together, would endanger a publick Conflagration; such Persons, I say, are evidently unworthy of their Commissions and publick Character, as being false to their Country either out of the most abject Fear or traiterous Corruption. For it is Notorious, that the late, not to say, present Riots and Tumults, might have been stifled in their infancy, if they that are intrusted with the Execution of Justice had performed their respective Obligations with any degree of Courage, Honour or Conduct. But it is to be hoped, that how inexcusable soever the Behaviour of some Persons may have been, all Invasion of the Property of any that are under the Protection of the Law, will be effectually restrained hereafter by the wise Care and just Precautions of the Legislature; since such Acts of Violence are not only contrary to natural Equity and positive Law, but it is uncertain where such a Seditious Storm may burst another time, and what body of Men it may next discharge its Fury when it is directed by more artful Hands behind the Scene.

That we have all the Reason in the World to exert our Courage in so critical a Juncture, requires very little time or Argument to evince. For however Men may flatter themselves with vain Hopes that either study to deceive others, or are deceived themselves, and resolved to persist in their Errors, nothing less than the absolute Ruine of our Church and State is to be expected, if God for our Sake

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should abandon us to the Fury of our Enemies, and give Success to the Attempts of the Pretender to the Crown, as carried on by a restless disaffected Party at Home, in expectation of Assistance from abroad. They must be sanguine to a degree of Stupidity, and entirely ignorant of the nature of Revenge, of Popery, and unlimited Power, that can hope for any other Consequence of so great a Judgment from Heaven than the blackest Persecution in the World, a total subversion of our Church and Civil Liberties and probably the Extirpation of the whole Reformed Religion.

But notwithstanding this Malancholy View, it is Evident (God be thanked) that we have not *the Spirit of Fear, but of Power*, and that there is no just reason to despair of overcoming those Dangers that surround us. When we recollect the many instances of Wisdom and Valour, that have been so highly applauded by all *Europe*, and given by him whom God in his gracious Providence has placed upon the Throne of these Realms, all that have any real Zeal for our Constitution in Church and State, cannot but rejoyce that a Prince of so great Conduct and Experience is at the Head of our Affairs in such a Crisis, and consequently entertain well-grounded Hopes, that he will in due time extricate us out of all our difficulties, and make us once again a flourishing and happy People. A Prince, whose Interest is inseparable from that of the Publick, and who has resolution enough to pursue the true ends of Government, and shew that he is *a Minister of God to us for good*. A Prince, that not only has the *Spirit of Love* for the true Protestant Interest, but that likewise of a *sound Mind* to discern between Good and Evil, between Pretence and Reality, and of *Power* too, to protect
and

and reward good Subjects, and execute Justice upon Criminals of what Rank or Figure soever. When we consider again the Unanimity and Firmness of the great Council of the Land, and the perfect Harmony of the several parts of the Legislative Body with the Head that animates and presides over them, we cannot reasonably doubt of the good Success of those Counsels that are prosecuted with so much Vigour, by the joynt Concurrence of a just Authority that our Constitution allows of. When we again reflect on an apparent Majority of those that are *Faithful in the Land*, and true to the Interest of their Country, and especially in this great Metropolis, in contra-distinction to those that *have Eyes and see not, have Ears and hear not, neither understand the Signs of the Times*, by the Blessing of God we shall rejoyce in a Successful Issue of Things, and triumph over all Opposition. But the goodness of the Cause we are engaged in will most effectually raise our Spirits, and dissipate our Fears, when we consider that it is the Vindication of the best Church that is now to be found in the World, and therefore of true Christianity itself, if it be still in being, against the most scandalous Metamorphosis of the Gospel of Christ into detestable Superstition, and Anti-christian Idolatry. That it is a necessary Defence not only of the Common Rights of Mankind, but of our own admirable Constitution of Government, suited best to the nature of Reasonable Creatures, and especially to the Genius of Englishmen against the menaces of the most Oppressive and Tyrannical Power; which if it takes place, must unavoidably end in the loss of the most Valuable thing in this World, and therefore highly worth contending for, I mean, our Legal Liberty.

But chiefly have we reason to lift up our Heads with joy, to be strong and of a good Courage, because we are entitled to the Favour of the great God, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Supreme Arbiter of all Events, by the evident Justice of our Cause. It is he that has Providentially placed his present Majesty on the Throne of his Ancestors, and we trust will support him with his Arm of Omnipotence in the Possession of it. This we have reason to hope the God of Justice will perform, because his Title to it is incontestable, as being established on the fundamental Laws of our Constitution. For such have been proved to be not only the particular Laws of the limitation of the Succession to the Crown, enacted since the late Happy Revolution, but by the Confession of all, that Law is granted to be such which was enacted by the renowned *Elizabeth*, as Declarative of our ancient Constitution on that behalf, and as fully expressive of the Justice of all those Limitations that are made by Persons invested with the Supreme Executive and Legislative Authority. Which Authority has been so amply Recognized both in and out of Parliament, and so solemnly Acknowledged to have Resided in those that Limited the present Succession, that nothing but the grossest ignorance, in conjunction with the infatuation of Party-Prejudice, can betray Men into such Mistakes as under a pretence of Conscience would throw us into irrecoverable Distractions, and at last into downwright Ruine. I say, *pretence of Conscience*, since those Particular Laws that are established among us, ought to be submitted to and acquiesced in by all in Virtue of the general Law of the Gospel, which (without any specification of Constitutions) commands Obedience to all lawful Higher Powers. And such our Present ones have been, to the Confusion of our Adversaries, not only Affirmed but Proved to be.

Having thus shewn (in the Language of *St. Paul*) that *God has not given us the Spirit of Fear* but of Power, and that we are *in nothing terrified by our Adversaries, of whose services we are not ignorant*; give me leave to add (in *St. Paul's* Style,) that *if we suffer for Righteousness sake, and not as Evil-doers*, we ought not to be afraid of their Terrors, neither be troubled,

*Vid. Statut.
ann. 13. Eliz.
Regin.*

*1 Pet. 3. 14.
15. 16.*

but

but sanctify the Lord God in our Hearts, as having a good Conscience ; that they that speak evil of us may be ashamed, as falsely accusing our good Conversation in Christ. However, I hope better things of this Assembly, and things that accompany Salvation, tho' I thus speak. For as we are not of them that draw back unto Perdition, and meditate a Return into Egypt, so being conscious of the Justice of our Cause, we ought to be able to give an Answer to every Man that asks us the Reason of the hope that is in us. Let us then be ever ready to assert that Cause against the Cavils of perverse and unreasonable Men, and shew that genuine love of our Country, as to use all our Personal Interest, and the Authority of our respective Stations in the Defence of our Constitution ; and if it be necessary, employ our Swords, as well as our Tongues and Pens, in Vindication of it. Let us convince all the World that we are endued with that Soundness of Mind, as steadily to adhere, thro' evil and good Report, to the most certain Standard of the publick good, our Established Laws and Religion. Let us chearfully submit to every Ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake, in a perfect abhorrence and detestation of those Rebellious Tumults of incensed and undiscerning Multitudes that are the present Reproach of our Country. Let us be Obedient not only for Wrath, but also for Conscience sake, to that Sacred Person, who is not only our Rightful Sovereign, but adorns the Crown he wears with a distinguished Lustre of Personal Virtues. Let us offer up incessantly our most fervent Prayers, that God would bless his Councils, and defend his Person from all open Violence and secret Conspiracy. Let us by the Advice of no less a Person than Solomon himself, fear the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to Change. Let these things sink down into our Ears ; for it is not a vain thing for us because it is our Life. Let us, to Conclude all in the Emphatical words of Holy Scripture, be of good Courage and (upon all proper Occasions) behave our selves Valiantly for our People, and for the Cities (as well as House) of our God: And let the Lord do that which is good in his Sight.

Now to God the Father, &c.

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